



JAMES A. NOYES, Director

# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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September 5, 2002

IN REPLY PLEASE  
REFER TO FILE:

EP-5

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: James A. Noyes  
Director of Public Works

### STORMWATER PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAM STATUS REPORT

In May 1996, your Board approved our contract with Rogers & Associates for a Storm Water Pollution Prevention public education program. A Countywide campaign was a requirement of the previous five-year National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit issued to the County of Los Angeles by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board in 1996 under the Clean Water Act. The contract included all tasks necessary to develop and implement the campaign, including researching the awareness levels and behaviors of County residents related to stormwater pollution, developing a strategy to educate the public, and implementing a comprehensive multimedia campaign. The term of the contract was five years for a total amount of \$5,235,000. The contract expired on July 26, 2001, approximately five months in advance of the current NPDES permit issued on December 13, 2001. The following provides an overview of the stormwater campaign achievements.

The first step in developing a public education campaign was a Countywide survey that determined baseline attitudes and knowledge for a representative sample of residents. Data collected from the survey was cross-tabulated and analyzed to determine which segments of the population were causing the most pollution and were also open to changing their behaviors. This "segmentation study" was the first of its kind in the stormwater pollution field and has become the model for jurisdictions throughout the nation. Segmentation study results allowed us to identify target audiences for the campaign that would yield the maximum results for the limited budget available.

Additional surveys were conducted midway through the contract period and at the end of the term to evaluate the effectiveness of outreach methods and messages and assist us in modifying the program to achieve the best results. The surveys show significant success in raising public awareness about the fact that storm drains lead straight to the ocean and that residents' individual actions contribute to the problem. More importantly, survey results show that the campaign has had success in changing behaviors particularly among the audiences targeted.

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Once the initial survey data was analyzed, the campaign concept was developed. As Principal Permittee, the County implements the public education component of the NPDES Permit on behalf of the 84 Co-Permittee jurisdictions Countywide, therefore, consensus had to be reached on the campaign theme and messages. Public Works staff, as well as contractor staff, participated in building support for Project Pollution Prevention a theme based on research results that could be supported and supplemented by all jurisdictions and that conveyed the message most effectively to residents.

Project Pollution Prevention includes radio, newspaper, billboard, and bus shelter advertising, media relations, nontraditional advertising and corporate sponsorships, community events, collaborations with environmental organizations and nonprofit organizations, collateral materials, a toll-free environmental hotline and environmental resources website, a newsletter, school education programs, and other components. It has been well received by the public, local cities, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the environmental community, the media, other jurisdictions in the State and the nation, and the State Water Resources Control Board. Project Pollution Prevention was responsible for millions of message exposures or "media impressions" for County of Los Angeles residents, hundreds of thousands of face-to-face contacts at community events, and brought in more than \$500,000 in corporate partnership and media value to augment the campaign.

As a part of the December 2001 NPDES Permit's requirements, we recently released a Request for Proposals to continue our successful education campaign and improve upon it wherever possible. We have strengthened the emphasis on producing actual behavior change and added specifications for program assessment that when implemented will be the most advanced in the United States for a public education campaign. The experience gained through the last five-year campaign will be used to further refine campaign techniques and messages to do everything possible to inspire County residents to change their polluting behaviors and improve the quality of our water.

If you have any questions regarding this update, please contact me or your staff may contact Don Wolfe, Assistant Director, at (626) 458-4014.

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cc: Chief Administrative Office  
Executive Office.

